

It is with much sadness that I am letting you know that Professor Helen Muir OBE passed away on Saturday 20 March after a serious illness.

As you may be aware Helen was part of our Standing Group and had been actively involved in assisting the CHFG campaign for independent investigation in healthcare. She came to healthcare late, having already written what became the pilot's text book on human factors in aviation; and having been directly involved in landmark work in aviation and rail. In both spheres she was actively involved in investigations, some of which left a fundamental mark on safety practices. But when Helen spoke about such events, it was her understanding of human nature, and the personal impact of these events that she was able to bring to life.

I first met Helen in 2006 and she immediately offered to support our work in any way possible. Since then she was active in supporting a number of strands of work, and in particular presented to the National Patient Safety Forum in 2009 on the benefits of independent investigation. For this she developed an outline of a trial which I am still working with. Latterly she accompanied myself and Jane Reid to meet with the NPSA to further our aim and persuade the NHS that not to do this was unthinkable.

Whenever I met Helen I was always struck by her quiet modest nature. She only spoke when she had something to say, but what she had to say was always thoughtful and decisive.

Unfortunately at the time of our last meeting Helen was already ill; her last email to me was at the start of this year, still full of support and praise for the work we were doing and with little thought to her own circumstances. Helen was courageous and brave throughout her illness and passed away peacefully surrounded by her family.

I feel we have lost someone unique.

Martin Bromiley
Chair Clinical Human Factors Group